

GrassRoots GunRights

P.O. Box 2446
Lexington, SC 29071

April 21, 2010

The Honorable John M. "Jake" Knotts, Jr.
SC Senate
Post Office Box 142
Columbia, SC 29202

RE: H. 3585

Dear Senator Knotts,

H. 3585 is a poorly written bill, which could legislatively entrap innocent gun owners. This bill is drafted with language so all encompassing that many innocent gun owners could be prosecuted, fined, and sent to prison. Unfortunately, GrassRoots GunRights was not aware of this bill until after it had already passed the House. Thus, we were not able to voice the concerns of gun owners until now.

H. 3585 states "Examples of 'false or secret compartments' include, but are not limited to, false, altered, or modified fuel tanks, original factory equipment on a vehicle that has been modified, and any compartment, space, or box that is added or attached to existing compartments, spaces, or boxes of the vehicle." This could be interpreted so that a compartment that is "original factory equipment on a vehicle" could be used to send someone to prison. The absurdity of labeling original factory equipment as a "secret compartment" to prosecute innocent citizens is simply astounding.

An honest citizen might install a hidden compartment in her vehicle in order to keep valuables safe from thieves. For gun owners, a gun safe installed in a vehicle could be considered a "false or secret compartment." Some might argue there is a requirement that the gun safe contain contraband to make the gun safe illegal. But, that argument falls apart when considering other sections of the bill.

Imagine an honest citizen who installs a gun safe in her vehicle in order to store her firearm. She later decides to sell her vehicle. Suppose the new owner uses the gun safe to store contraband. Subsection C states, "It is unlawful for a person to knowingly install, create, build, or fabricate in a vehicle a false or secret compartment." The honest gun owner who previously owned the vehicle is the person who installed the gun safe. The previous owner could now be in trouble as the bill is currently drafted for installing the secret compartment.

Subsection D states, "It is unlawful for a person to knowingly sell, trade, or otherwise dispose of a vehicle which is in violation of this section." If the next owner of the vehicle uses the compartment to hide contraband, then the previous owner could suddenly be guilty of violating

Subsection D. Even though it is the new owner using the secret compartment for contraband, the previous owner could now be in trouble as the bill is currently drafted for selling a vehicle containing a secret compartment.

H. 3585 might also hurt businesses that make and install car safes, companies that make recreational vehicles, or companies that customize cars, vans, boats or aircraft. Such vehicles can have multiple hidden compartments. If the compartment is later used for contraband, the company or employee that installed the compartment could be prosecuted using this legislation.

H. 3585 is written so broadly that many innocent citizens could be caught in its web. New laws that could legislatively entrap good citizens are not needed and should be rejected by this subcommittee. Laws should not be enacted that could easily snare innocent people.

GrassRoots GunRights strongly opposes H. 3585. H. 3585 should be killed, not enacted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William W. Rentiers III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent "III" at the end.

William W. Rentiers III
Executive Officer